

Prolog

The Dark Side: How Evangelical Teachings Corrupt Love and Truth.

(<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2006/06/chapter-1-leaving-home.html>)

If God is good, and he made nature, why does nature so often reward strength rather than goodness?

Why do so many people, including children, suffer excruciating pain, even pain unto death?

Does it really make sense to say that Adam and Eve brought death into the world?

Why do so many scientists think the world wasn't made six to ten thousand years ago like my biblical genealogies suggest?

Why does the violence in the Bible still bother me, after I've had it explained so many times?

How does blood atonement (salvation through the death of Jesus) work?

All of those Buddhists and Hindus on the other side of the world who are going to suffer eternally: if God decided they would be born there, how is their damnation fair?

How can heaven be perfectly joyous if it co-exists with hell?

If each Christian has the spirit of God dwelling in him or her, how come Christians are wrong so often?

Are Christians really better than other people?

Would the world truly fall into violent anarchy if the Christians weren't here as "a light shining in the darkness?"

How did we come to believe all that we do, anyway? Where did the Bible come from?

Who decided what got included, and why?

Why do I feel like I'm lying to myself when I try to make all the pieces fit together?

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Buddha questions the supposed divine justice of the creator as follows:

"He who has eyes can see the sickening sight, Why does not Brahma set his creatures right?

If his wide power no limits can restrain, why is his hand so rarely spread to bless?

Why are his creatures all condemned to pain?

Why does he not to all give happiness?

Why do fraud, lies, and ignorance prevail?

Why triumphs falsehood, truth and justice fail?

I count your Brahma one the unjust among, Who made a world in which to shelter wrong."

(Buridatta Jataka No. 543)

"If beings experience pleasure & pain based on the creative act of a supreme god, then obviously the Niganthas (The sage who wear nothing) have been created by an evil supreme god, which is why they now feel such fierce, sharp, racking pains." (Majjhima Nikaya, 101, Devadaha Sutta)

Caution:

Reading or checking the stuff below may be hazardous to your belief, heart and having a headache:

- [Why did God create evil?](#)

- [EVANGELIST REJECTS GOD!](#)
 - [The GOD of the Old Testament](#)
 - [Why the Christian God is Impossible](#)
 - [THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR JESUS](#)
 - [The Dark Side of the Character of Jesus of Nazareth](#)
 - [A Life without Christ](#)
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Why did God create evil?

If God planned everything, why did He plan for really bad things to happen?

<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2003/05/why-did-god-create-evil.php>

The Christian Response:

The "Problem of Evil" is a philosophical stumbling block for many people. Many atheists attack biblical creation on philosophical grounds. The primary questions atheists pose are: "If God is real, and God created everything, why did He create evil?" "Why did a personal, loving God create a world in which evil exists?" "Why did God give man freedom to commit evil acts?" Atheists reason, "Surely, an all-knowing God of love would not allow evil to exist in His world."

The response to the foregoing is summed up in God's nature and His desire for mankind. Look at the logic: How could God allow for love without the potential for evil? God could have created robots that do nothing more than forever say, "I love you, I love you, I love you." But such creatures would be incapable of a real love relationship. Love is a choice, and the Bible says God desires a real love relationship with His creation. Love is not real unless we have the ability to not love. One of God's attributes is omniscience. God knew that in a world with choice, there would be much evil -- to choose not to love is evil by definition. However, there would also be the capacity for real love. Philosopher Alvin Plantinga writes, "An all loving, all powerful, all knowing Being could permit as much evil as He pleased without forfeiting His claim to being all loving, so long as for every evil state of affairs He permits there is an accompanying greater good". The potential for love outweighs the existence of evil, especially if evil can only exist for a time. Evil is a side effect of love. Suffering and death are a side effect of evil (Romans 5:12). God says in His Bible that this side effect is only for a time. Evil serves the limited purpose of establishing real love relationships between creation and the Creator, and evil will be done away with after that purpose is achieved. "And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:17).

The Ex-Christian Rebuttal:

Okay, let's examine the so called logic of this interesting post. The writer seems to be saying that love and evil are mutually exclusive. However from the pen of the New Testament writer of Luke it plainly says: "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For sinners also love those that love them." *Luke 6:32* Apparently the wicked are capable of love. Another thought that comes to my mind is that although my wife and I love each other very much, neither of us care about other men and women in that way. I have no such emotion when it comes to the rest of the women in the world, and she has no such interest in other men. I also very much love my children, but other people's children rarely enter my thoughts. The writer above is saying that for GOD or people to experience love, then evil has to be in the world. I can't help but wonder if I am evil then, since I do not love every other person in the world. Why is it so impossible to imagine the likelihood of someone not loving GOD without being evil? Why couldn't GOD create creatures with the capacity of either loving Him or not, without them also being wicked in the process?

One of the attributes of GOD is that he never changes. "For I am the LORD, I change not" *Malachi 3:6* Since He never changes, what changed that he somehow at some point decided he needed people to love and be loved by? Oh, and I wasn't aware that GOD needed anything at all. I was under the impression that GOD was without needs, wants or desires. A desire implies a lack of something in a person. If I desire a meal, it is likely that I lack enough nutrition for the day. I desire things because I need things. I perceive that I lack something and therefore strive to fill that lack. Apparently GOD doesn't have enough love in the threesome of the Trinity. I would have to agree that real love is only real if it is accompanied by the capacity to not love. However, as I tried to communicate above, the ability to not love someone does not immediately equate to evil in my mind. I do not love lots of people, but I do not therefore hate them and wish all manner of evil on them. I just really do not see the correlation the writer is trying to draw between love and evil.

This is the way I see God's love. God loves a person. The person is not interested for whatever reason. God feels like his love has been spurned. God demonizes the person who is just not interested in his love and calls him or her evil. God gets his panties all in a wad and throws the poor bastard in hell to rot in eternal torment forever and ever.

Think about it. Pretend I have a woman who is interested in being my lover. She is a nice person, attractive, smart, and has a thousand other excellent qualities. However, she is just not my type, so I do not return her affections. Now her love for me turns to hatred. She views me as horribly evil, and she claims I have broken her heart. She says she doesn't want to see me in an early grave, so gives me the chance to repent and love her. She threatens me with terrible consequences if I don't love her back.

Am I evil or is she nuts?

Am I evil or is the Christian idea of God totally f--cked?

God, being all powerful, could just as easily have created a world where people were allowed to choose to love him or not without it resulting in all sorts of disease, death, pain, hatred, evil, and so on. This being so, then I conclude that either GOD is a deranged lunatic, or He just doesn't exist at all.

What do you think?

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Evangelist rejects God!

[HTTP://WWW.NATUREOFCREATION.ORG/ARTICLES/EVANG_REJECTS_GOD.HTM](http://www.natureofcreation.org/articles/evang_rejects_god.htm)

"It's simply not possible any longer to believe the Biblical account of creation."

When I first saw this headline, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I read the article, and then reread it! I wanted to cry over the story! How could this be so?!! As the years pass, many names and events become forgotten and are replaced with those that occupy headlines today. The name of Charles Templeton is one that is unknown to many of my generation. A sad story accompanies that name – a story I had never heard until I read this article.

Charles Templeton was a man widely known in the 40s & 50s among Christians. He was an evangelist who was even better known than Billy Graham. He spoke to thousands, both in the USA and abroad, leading hundreds of people to the Lord. Templeton's ministry was prominent, and in 1946, he was listed among those "*best used of God*" by the National Association of Evangelicals.

He was also the pastor of a rapidly growing church in Toronto, which he had started with only his family and a few friends. Templeton had also become one of three vice-presidents of Youth for Christ Int'l., a new organization in 1945. Newspapers and magazines carried reports of his meetings informing readers that he was winning 150 converts a night.

However, his popularity and success as an evangelist apparently just veiled the doubts that began to arise within him. The more he read, the more he found he was beginning to question the essentials of the Christian faith. His doubts began with the book of Genesis. In his desire to pursue a more liberal approach to his questions, he began studying at Princeton Theological Seminary. In so doing, he said to Billy Graham: 'But, Billy, it's simply not possible any longer to believe, for instance, the biblical account of creation. The world wasn't created over a period of days a few thousand years ago; it has evolved over millions of years. It's not a matter of speculation; it's demonstrable fact.'

The next several years of "ministry" continued his spiritual decline. He finally gave it up altogether in 1957. Since leaving the ministry, Templeton took a prominent place in journalism and other media in Toronto. His slippery slide into unbelief began when he concluded that it was intellectual suicide to accept as truth the literal teachings of the Bible. Instead, he listened to physicists who say "it took billions of years for the universe, our galaxy, our solar system, and our world to evolve to its present form"; to anthropologists who say that "our earlier ancestors did not suddenly appear fully formed, but were anthropoid creatures who lived on the earth millions of years ago"; to geneticists who say "it is nonsense to believe that the reason for all the crime, poverty, suffering, and general wickedness in the world is sin"; and to geologists who say "there is no evidence at all of a worldwide flood as told in Genesis", etc.

Do you notice something interesting? His downfall started when he began to doubt the Scriptures in Genesis chapter 1, right at the beginning – the creation account! And the slide is documented by Templeton himself in his autobiography entitled: **FAREWELL TO GOD – My reasons for rejecting the Christian faith**, which was released in 1996.

Templeton refers to Bible stories as 'fables'. The cancer of his unbelief spread to the very doctrine of salvation itself. He states that the 'entire resurrection story is not credible'. He ridicules Christians who reject "science" when it opposes biblical teachings, and especially those who believe that the only deliverance from the curse of sin and eventual banishment to an eternal hell is to be "born again".

Sad? You bet! But remember where it started - right at the beginning, in Genesis....where it usually does! By the way, where do you stand on the first chapters of Genesis? Are they fables to you? – Or literal truth?

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The GOD of the Old Testament

<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2003/02/god-of-old-testament.php>

In this section, Charles Templeton discusses God as represented in the Old Testament:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." These are perhaps the most familiar words in the history of Western civilization. They form the opening sentence in the Jewish Torah and the Christian Bible and are fundamental to both traditional Jewish and Christian beliefs.

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible in a dramatic series of events spanning six days,.....

They are enthralling tales and across the centuries they have made an indelible impression on countless millions of men and women. But are they history? Or are they no more than the traditions of a Middle Eastern Semitic tribe and best categorized as folklore?

An unbiased reading of the biblical account will clearly show that, while some of the events described in the early books of the Old Testament may have been based on historic events, most are simply embellished folk tales.

THE CREATION STORY IS an attempt by its authors to validate Israel's view of itself as unique among humankind - God's Chosen People. The astonishing part of the story is that, millennia later, millions of men and women, Jew and gentile alike, continue to accept the biblical accounts of the Creation as fact even while acknowledging the evidence of science that the universe had its beginnings billions of years ago and that genus Homo has been around for at least 2.6 million years.

My purpose in these pages is not to denigrate Christian or Jewish beliefs - they are part of the bedrock on which our society has been built - but rather to make it clear that it is no longer possible for an informed man or woman to believe that, for all its ancient wisdom, its remarkable insights, and its occasional literary excellence, the Bible is either a reliable account of our origins as human beings or, as the Christian church insists, the infallible Word of God. The ancient lore of the Old Testament and much of the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth in the New may contribute to the fashioning of a useful philosophy of life, but they are anything but the definitive word on the origin, the meaning, and the purpose of human existence.

LET US BEGIN THEN AT the beginning, with the Creation story in the book of Genesis or, more accurately, with the Creation stories, for there are two, each differing from the other at almost every point. So many and so fundamental are the intrinsic contradictions that it is impossible to reconcile them. Even the deities involved are different. In the first story God is, in the Hebrew, Elohim, in the second, Yahweh.

The first account is found in Genesis 1:1 through 2:3. The deity is Elohim. The earth is a void, a dark, fathomless sea. Elohim begins by separating the night from the day.

On Day Two he divides the waters in two with a vault above, calling the vault Heaven.

On Day Three he commands dry land to appear, calling the land Earth and the waters seas. He then creates vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit-bearing trees.

On Day Four he says, "Let there be lights in the vault of Heaven, a great light to govern the day [the sun] and a lesser light [the moon] to govern the night." And about time! There have already been three sunrises.

On Day Five he makes the seas teem with "sea serpents and every kind of fish" and turns the space between the earth and the vault of Heaven into a habitat "for every kind of winged creature."

Day Six - The Big One! Elohim has warmed up by creating the domestic animals, the birds, the wild beasts, and the reptiles. He now, it would seem, enlists some aid. The text reads: "And let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them be dominant over every other living creature. [*Italics mine*]" And he does this, giving the man mastery over all other creatures and ordering him to mate and multiply.

"And Elohim saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.'

This, according to the scriptures, is how the earth and life on earth began.

BUT HOLD ON A MOMENT! It isn't. Four verses into the second chapter of Genesis we come upon a second Creation story, a completely different story, even a different God! In version one he is Elohim. In version two he is Yahweh. And the second version differs from the first at every point. Rather than "a formless void, a dark fathomless sea," as in version one, the earth is described as a desert, barren of vegetation and without water, "for the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." There is no mention of a woman, an animal, a bird, a fish, or "a creeping thing."

Yahweh then plants a garden in Eden and fills it with every kind of tree. Among them - and here's the thorn on the rose! - the Tree of life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The man is placed in the garden, told to cultivate it and given a warning: "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it: For on the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

At this point, belatedly realizing that "it is not good that the man should be alone," Yahweh says, "I will make him an helpmaet for him." Whereupon he does a very strange thing. The text says: "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them."

It would seem, on the face of it, that Yahweh's intention was that one of the animals be the man's mate, for the story continues: "But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." So, "the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam. And he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib that the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man."

Whereupon Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called wo-man because she was taken out of man." The story then concludes: "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

NOTE THE FUNDAMENTAL disparities in the two Creation stories:

In the first story the God is Elohim. In the second he is Yahweh.

In the first story the earth is described as covered with water, and it is not until the third day that Yahweh commands dry land to appear. In the second story the earth is a barren desert, without any water "save for a mist that rose from the land."

In the first story, Elohim divides the waters of the earth, sustains the upper waters with a vault and names the space above it, Heaven. In the second there is no such separation and no mention of a Heaven. In the first story, Elohim separates the light from the darkness, thus establishing the first day. Paradoxically, he doesn't create the sun or the moon until Day Four.

In the first story, having created the birds, animals, and sea creatures, Elohim creates a man and a woman. In the second story Yahweh begins by creating a man, forming him from the dust of the ground. He then creates the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It should be noted that although the fruit of the second tree is the cause of Adam's fall from grace it is not so much as mentioned by Elohim.

*In the second story, Yahweh, having decided to provide a helpmate for the man, proceeds to create, not a woman, but the animals. Then, when no helpmate suitable for man was found, Yahweh fashioned, rather than created, a woman, forming her from one of the man's ribs.

*The first story ends happily, with Elohim giving the man and the woman dominance over every living thing, and concludes with the words, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good."

Whereupon, he rested from his labours on the seventh day.

THEN, SUDDENLY, A monumental disaster! A talking snake, described as "more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made," comes to the woman and says, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

And the woman said unto the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die." And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And now the denouement. Later, they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:

and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "Where art thou?" And he said, "I heard thy voice in the Garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

And he said, "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?"

And the man said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat."

And the Lord God said unto the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?" And the woman said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Whereupon Yahweh lays a curse on the serpent, the man, and the woman, fashions clothing for the man and woman from the skins of animals, and, lest they eat of the Tree of Life and live forever, banishes them from the garden, cursing the soil of all the earth and informing the man that he will subsist by the sweat of his brow until he returns to the dust from which he was formed.

He then posts cherubims at the east of the Garden of Eden and a flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

AS IS OBVIOUS, THE stories are fables, attempts to explain how the world and its various life forms came into being and why life is imperfect. But, juvenile and contradictory as these folk tales are, they have remained the grounds of Christian theology across the centuries. They purport to explain man's existence and his sinfulness, nature's variety and its jeopardies, and all suffering and death.

But surely no contemporary man or woman can continue to hold to a world view based on these ancient and primitive folk tales. They may have sufficed for a people living in a time when men and women knew nothing of the cosmos and little about the laws that govern it and needed for their peace of mind plausible explanations for the mysteries of life and death, nature's bounty and its frequent jeopardy, and the ten thousand imponderables that are a part of life.

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Surely it is a negation of human experience and intellectual and scientific progress to cling to the archaic and untenable notion that the universe and our lives are the creation of and in the control of a primitive tribal deity, a male chauvinist much given to anger, intolerance, and fits of pique when crossed.

Moreover, if God is, as the Christian church teaches, omniscient, if he exists apart from time and knows the future, would he not know before he created the world that the experiment would end in disaster?

The question then becomes: if he knows the end from the beginning, why go through the exercise? If his goal was to create an intelligent species and set it down in a paradise, why would he load the dice against his new creatures by creating a wily talking snake, which was, the Genesis story says, "more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made"?

Unless the deity is Machiavellian or obtuse, none of this makes sense.

Equally incredible is the fact that, having created the man and the woman, God forbids them to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, being fully aware, as he presumably would be, that should they do so they would acquire the ability to distinguish between right and wrong and, in this respect, "be as the gods." How naive of the omniscient deity not to know that, given the opportunity, they would seize it. Surely the ability to discriminate between options is a desirable trait and one to be coveted?

If God is omniscient, would he not know that giving the man and the woman the ability to think but not to reason made them little different from the animals? So why trouble to create them? The assertion by the serpent that God wanted to withhold from Adam and Eve the power to reason because he knew that with it they would be like the gods suggests that the serpent already had the ability to reason. Quite clearly he knew the difference between right and wrong and was out to frustrate God's purposes.

Furthermore, if God has a need to be worshipped, and across the centuries he has insisted on it - on pain of eternal death! - he is not going to satisfy the need by creating a man and a woman incapable of choice. If they have no choice but to worship the Creator, what satisfaction could there be for God in that? Worship from a fawning automaton would not be worth having. For worship to have value it must proceed from a creature who has the ability to withhold it and then chooses to offer it. Without the ability to make rational choices a man is not a man, he is one of the lesser creatures - and God had already created enough of them.

And what is this consuming need the God of the Bible has to be worshipped, to be everlastingly praised and assured that he is the Great One, the most deserving of adoration and praise? Today such a condition would be diagnosed as pathological.

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NOTE THAT, IN THE Genesis account, the Creator is utterly unlike the omniscient and loving God of Christian theology:

He is inept: His master plan for an Edenic paradise goes awry from the beginning.

He lacks foresight: His original intention was that Adam mate with one of the animals; the woman was an afterthought.

He is unjust: He curses not only the man and woman but all their unborn descendants for what was inevitable given the nature he himself had created in them.

He is vindictive: He tells the woman, "Because of what you have done, I will make child-bearing painful for you. And, to ensure your punishment, I will cause you to lust for your husband."

He is gender-biased: He tells the woman that her role will be one of subservience to her husband. "He will lord it over you."

He is not omniscient: Out for an evening stroll in the garden, he seems to have no idea where the first man and woman are hiding and has to ask where they are and what they have been up to.

He is subject to fatigue: The Sabbath was instituted because, as the Genesis record specifies: "God rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing."

BEFORE CONCLUDING THIS segment, let us look again at the nature of what the Christian church calls "original sin" - Adam's sin.

God creates Eden and in this paradise he places various creatures, among them a man and a woman. The humans differ from the animals in that they have been invested with the ability to reason - to deliberate and to make choices. Despite this, however, the man is forbidden on pain of eternal death to eat from a tree in the Garden of Eden because it bears "the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil."

But what could possibly be wrong in wanting to know the difference between good and evil? And why, if God didn't want Adam to know the difference between good and evil, did he give him the ability to reason? The distinguishing difference between men and animals is man's ability to weigh the various options in a given set of circumstances and make a rational decision. Moreover, if one doesn't know the difference between good and evil, how does one distinguish between what is good and what is evil? And beyond all this, why would God give Adam the power to choose when, being omniscient, he would know before doing so how Adam would react when tempted?

None of it makes sense.

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Why the Christian God is Impossible

<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2003/02/why-christian-god-is-impossible.php>

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The Atheist Soapbox (*a web-page that has now been taken down*) Published by permission from the author

Introduction

Christians consider the existence of their God to be an obvious truth. This assumption is false, not only because evidence for the existence of this presumably ubiquitous yet invisible God is lacking, but because the very nature Christians attribute to this God is self-contradictory.

Proving a universal negative

Many Christians, as well as atheists, claim that it is impossible to prove a universal negative. For example, while we may not have evidence that unicorns or dragons exist, we cannot prove that they do not exist. Unless we have a complete knowledge of the universe, we must admit the possibility that somewhere in the universe, there might be such creatures.

But the claim that omniscience is needed to prove a universal negative presumes that the concept which we are discussing is logically coherent. If the attributes which we assign to a hypothetical object or being are self-contradictory, then we can conclude that it cannot exist, and therefore does not exist. I do not need a complete knowledge of the universe to prove that cubic spheres do not exist. Such objects have mutually-exclusive attributes which make their existence impossible. A cube, by definition, has 8 corners, while a sphere has none. These properties are completely incompatible -- they cannot be held simultaneously by the same object.

I intend to show that the supposed properties of the Christian God Yahweh, like those of a cubic sphere, are incompatible, and by so doing, to demonstrate that Yahweh's existence is an impossibility.

Defining YHWH

Christians have endowed their God with all of the following attributes: He is eternal, all-powerful, and created everything. He created all the laws of nature and can change anything by an act of will. He is all-good, all-loving, and perfectly just. He is a personal God who experiences all of the emotions a human does. He is all-knowing. He sees everything past and future.

God's creation was originally perfect, but humans, by disobeying him, brought imperfection into the world. Humans are evil and sinful, and must suffer in this world because of their sinfulness. God gives humans the opportunity to accept forgiveness for their sin, and all who do will be rewarded with eternal bliss in heaven, but while they are on earth, they must suffer for his sake. All humans who choose not to accept this forgiveness must go to hell and be tormented for eternity.

These attributes of God are related by the Bible, which Christians believe to be the perfect and true Word of God.

One verse which many Christians are fond of quoting says that atheists are fools. I intend to show that the above concepts of God are completely incompatible, and reveal the impossibility of all of them being held simultaneously by the same being. There is no foolishness in denying the impossible. Foolishness is worshipping an impossible God.

Perfection seeks even more perfection

What did God do during that eternity before he created everything?

If God was all that existed back then, what disturbed the eternal equilibrium and compelled him to create?

Was he bored? Was he lonely?

God is supposed to be perfect. If something is perfect, it is complete -- it needs nothing else. We humans engage in activities because we are pursuing the elusive perfection, because there is disequilibrium caused by a difference between what we are and what we want to be. If God is perfect, there can be no disequilibrium. There is nothing he needs, nothing he desires, and nothing he must or will do. A God who is perfect does nothing except exist. A perfect creator God is impossible.

Perfection begets imperfection

But, for the sake of argument, let's continue. Let us suppose that this perfect God did create the universe. Humans were the crown of his creation, since they were created in God's image and had the ability to make decisions. However, these humans spoiled the original perfection by choosing to disobey God.

What!?! If something is perfect, nothing imperfect can come from it. Someone once said that bad fruit cannot come from a good tree, yet this "perfect" God created a "perfect" universe which was rendered imperfect by the "perfect" humans.

The ultimate source of imperfection is God. What is perfect cannot make itself imperfect, so humans must have been created imperfect. What is perfect cannot create anything imperfect, so God must be imperfect to have created these imperfect humans. A perfect God who creates imperfect humans is impossible.

The Freewill Argument

The Christians' objection to this argument involves freewill. They say that a being must have freewill to be happy. The omnibenevolent God did not wish to create robots, so he gave humans freewill to enable them to experience love and happiness. But the humans used this freewill to choose evil, and introduced imperfection into God's originally perfect universe. God had no control over this decision, so the blame for our imperfect universe is on the humans, not God.

Here is why the argument is weak. First, if God is omnipotent, then the assumption that freewill is necessary for happiness is false. If God could make it a rule that only beings with freewill may experience happiness, then he could just as easily have made it a rule that only robots may experience happiness. The latter option is clearly superior, since perfect robots will never make decisions which could render them or their creator unhappy, whereas beings with freewill could. A perfect and omnipotent God who creates beings capable of ruining their own happiness is impossible.

Second, even if we were to allow the necessity of freewill for happiness, God could have created humans with freewill who did not have the ability to choose evil, but to choose between several good options.

Third, God supposedly has freewill, and yet he does not make imperfect decisions. If humans are miniature images of God, our decisions should likewise be perfect. Also, the occupants of heaven, who presumably must have freewill to be happy, will never use that freewill to make imperfect decisions. Why would the originally perfect humans do differently?

The point remains: the presence of imperfections in the universe disproves the supposed perfection of its creator.

All-good God knowingly creates future suffering

God is omniscient. When he created the universe, he saw the sufferings which humans would endure as a result of the sin of those original humans. He heard the screams of the damned. Surely he would have known that it would have been better for those humans to never have been born (in fact, the Bible says this very thing), and surely this all-compassionate deity would have foregone the creation of a universe destined to imperfection in which many of the humans were doomed to eternal suffering. A perfectly compassionate being who creates beings which he knows are doomed to suffer is impossible.

Infinite punishment for finite sins

God is perfectly just, and yet he sentences the imperfect humans he created to infinite suffering in hell for finite sins. Clearly, a limited offense does not warrant unlimited punishment. God's sentencing of the imperfect humans to an eternity in hell for a mere mortal lifetime of sin is infinitely in just. The absurdity of this infinite punishment appears even greater when we consider that the ultimate source of the human's imperfection is the God who created them. A perfectly just God who sentences his imperfect creation to infinite punishment for finite sins is impossible.

Belief more important than action

Consider all of the people who live in the remote regions of the world who have never even heard the "gospel" of Jesus Christ. Consider the people who have naturally adhered to the religion of their parents and nation as they had been taught to do since birth. If we are to believe the Christians, all of these people will perish in the eternal fire for not believing in Jesus. It does not matter how just, kind, and generous they have been with their fellow humans during their lifetime: if they do not accept the gospel of Jesus, they are condemned. No just God would ever judge a man by his beliefs rather than his actions.

Perfection's imperfect revelation

The Bible is supposedly God's perfect Word. It contains instructions to humankind for avoiding the eternal fires of hell. How wonderful and kind of this God to provide us with this means for overcoming the problems for which he is ultimately responsible! The all-powerful God could have, by a mere act of will, eliminated all of the problems we humans must endure, but instead, in his infinite wisdom, he has opted to offer this indecipherable amalgam of books called the Bible as a means for avoiding the hell which he has prepared for us. The perfect God has decided to reveal his wishes in this imperfect work, written in the imperfect language of imperfect man, translated, copied, interpreted, voted on, and related by imperfect man. No two men will ever agree what this perfect word of God is supposed to mean, since much of it is either self-contradictory, or obscured by enigma. And yet the perfect God expects the imperfect humans to understand this paradoxical riddle using the imperfect minds with which he has equipped us. Surely the all-wise and all-powerful God would have known that it would have been better to reveal his perfect will directly to each of us, rather than to allow it to be debased and perverted by the imperfect language and botched interpretations of man.

Contradictory justice

One need look to no source other than the Bible to discover its imperfections, for it contradicts itself and thus exposes its own imperfection. It contradicts itself on matters of justice, for the same just God who assures his people that sons shall not be punished for the sins of their fathers turns around and destroys an entire household for the sin of one man (he had stolen some of Yahweh's war loot). It was this same Yahweh who afflicted thousands of his innocent people with plague and death to punish their evil king David for taking a census (?!). It was this same Yahweh who allowed the humans to slaughter his son because the perfect Yahweh had botched his own creation. Consider how many have been stoned, burned, slaughtered, raped, and enslaved because of Yahweh's skewed sense of justice. The blood of innocent babies is on the perfect, just, compassionate hands of Yahweh.

Contradictory history

The Bible contradicts itself on matters of history. A person who reads and compares the contents of the Bible will be confused about exactly who Esau's wives were, whether Timnah was a concubine or a son, and whether Jesus' earthly lineage is through Solomon or his brother Nathan. These are but a few of hundreds of documented historical contradictions. If the Bible cannot confirm itself in mundane earthly matters, how are we to trust it on moral and spiritual matters?

Unfulfilled prophecy

The Bible misinterprets its own prophecies. Read Isaiah 7 and compare it with Matthew 1 to find but one of many misinterpreted prophecies of which Christians are either passively or willfully ignorant. The sign given by Isaiah to King Ahaz was meant to assure him that his enemies King Rezin and King Remaliah would be defeated. The prophecy was fulfilled in the very next chapter. Yet Matthew 1 not only misinterprets the word for "maiden" as "virgin," but claims that this already-fulfilled prophecy is fulfilled by the virgin birth of Jesus!

The fulfillment of prophecy in the Bible is cited as proof of its divine inspiration, and yet here is but one major example of a prophecy whose intended meaning has been and continues to be twisted to support subsequent absurd and false doctrines. There are no ends to which the credulous will not go to support their feeble beliefs in the face of compelling evidence against them.

The Bible is imperfect. It only takes one imperfection to destroy the supposed perfection of this alleged Word of God. Many have been found. A perfect God who reveals his perfect will in an imperfect book is impossible.

The Omniscient changes the future

A God who knows the future is powerless to change it. An omniscient God who is all-powerful and free willed is impossible.

The Omniscient is surprised

A God who knows everything cannot have emotions. The Bible says that God experiences all of the emotions of humans, including anger, sadness, and happiness. We humans experience emotions as a result of new knowledge. A man who had formerly been ignorant of his wife's infidelity will experience the emotions of anger and sadness only after he has learned what had previously been hidden. In contrast, the omniscient God is ignorant of nothing. Nothing is hidden from him, nothing new may be revealed to him, so there is no gained knowledge to which he may react emotionally.

We humans experience anger and frustration when something is wrong which we cannot fix. The perfect, omnipotent God, however, can fix anything. Humans experience longing for things we lack. The perfect God lacks nothing. An omniscient, omnipotent, and perfect God who experiences emotion is impossible.

The conclusion of the matter

I have offered arguments for the impossibility, and thus the non- existence, of the Christian God Yahweh. No reasonable and free thinking individual can accept the existence of a being whose nature is as contradictory as that of Yahweh, the "perfect" creator of our imperfect

universe. The existence of Yahweh is as impossible as the existence of cubic spheres or invisible pink unicorns.

While believers may find comfort in being faithful to impossibilities, there is no greater satisfaction than a clear mind. You may choose to serve an impossible God. I will choose reality.

What do you say?

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THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE FOR JESUS

<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2002/05/historical-evidence-for-jesus.php>

The church has failed to supply any evidence that the Gospels were in existence and treated as an inspired and reliable witness for the alleged life of Jesus before 125 CE. This is demonstrated if one looks at the second century Christian writings:-

The author of 1 Clement, an anonymous letter, usually dated as ca. 96 CE, and attributed to Clement writing from Rome to the church at Corinth, does not appear to be aware of any written Gospels. On two occasions he refers to what Jesus had said; in chap. 13, he repeats the words of Jesus, very similar to those in the Gospels, although they are not quotations. In chap 46 he brings together two unconnected Mark a statements (9:21 and 14:21) and he appears to be quoting loose sayings which were circulating, but in not in a fixed form. He never refers to Gospel stories, or sayings, when it would be very appropriate, applicable and would support the argument he is making; instead he quotes or refers to the O.T (Old Testament).

Ignatius, ca. 110 CE, mentions the Gospel although it again appears he is referring to the Gospel message, rather than written documents. He gives much more information about Jesus' life, but as he refers to things not found in any of the four canonical Gospels, e.g. the story of Jesus speaking after the resurrection (Smyrn. 3) which is apparently from the Gospel according to the Hebrews and not from the canonical Gospels, and he describes the Bethlehem star in a way that is not found in Matt (the only canonical Gospel to mention this), it is not altogether clear what written Gospel was available to him. He does refer to other N.T writings (e.g. 1 Cor, Gal, Eph), but there is no clear indication that he knew of any written Gospels.

In his letter to the Philippians he uses terms found in Matt and Luke although it is noteworthy that the author of 1 John, facing the same Domestic problem as Ignatius, but at an earlier time, clearly did not have the biographical information about Jesus, which was available to Ignatius.

The Epistle of Barnabas ca. 130 CE, uses O.T references to support its contents when N.T ones would have been far more appropriate. He refers to a passage in Matt 20:16b and 22:14 and surprisingly for this early date calls it 'Scripture'; this is quite unique. However, 20:16b appears to have been an interpolation and if it was a loose saying, it is more likely the author is using Matt's source, rather than Matt itself. The author chose to use the apocryphal Enoch when writing about the eschaton (instead of Mark 13), and in referring to the crucifixion he refers to the Psalms rather than the Gospels. The Epistle (chap. 7) also has a saying attributed to Jesus not found in the Gospels.

Polycarp, ca. 130, apparently knew Matt and/or Luke and improves upon Clement's "quotations", but apparently didn't know of John's Gospel. Papias, ca. 140 CE, mentions Matt and Mark in written form, but not Luke or John, and he also made use of non-canonical apocryphal literature indicating that Matt and Mark were not seen a sole source of the gospel message. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, refers to written Gospels which were deemed as authoritative as the O.T, but he does not name them, nor state their

number, so it is not known what he was referring to. He too, used non-canonical material. It was only by ca. 170 CE that Tatian was using all four Gospels for his Diatessaron harmony, and about a decade later Irenaeus was arguing for the acceptance of the four canonical Gospels, and only those. Therefore it appears that the writings that give Jesus a historical place only appeared in the closing years of the first century and even these took quite some time to be established and accepted.

In respect of the belief in Jesus of Nazareth as a historical person, one is surely justified in asking why there appears to be so little said by this figure that is original. For example, a good deal of the Sermon of the Mount goes back to the O.T, or the 1st cent BCE apocryphal writings, e.g. the Book of Enoch. There is the further point concerning the remarkable silence over biographical - or chronological - details about Jesus' life in the early/earlier writings. Paul, who wrote the first layer of writings in the N.T, never invokes Jesus' words when they would be invaluable in supporting his argument, and this is not only with Paul, but elsewhere, e.g. 1 Peter. The authors of Romans 13:1-3 and 1 Peter 2:13-14 certainly could not have been aware of the story of Jesus appearing before Pilate in view of what they say.

This silence continued over into the end of the 1st century; in fact when the author of 1 Clement wrote, he seems to suffer from the same problem as Paul and others, i.e., a considerable ignorance about Jesus and the Gospels; obviously as is so clearly demonstrated, Christians always used scripture or suchlike to support any argument they were making, so is it somewhat bizarre that Clement does not do this. In chap. 3-6 he lists Abel, Joseph, Moses and David as examples of people who suffered through jealousy - but surely Jesus would have been the ideal example of this - Matt 27:18/Mark 15:10 ???

When he speaks about people preaching repentance in 7-8, he uses Ezekiel and Isaiah as examples - but again surely Jesus would have been the ideal example to use - Luke 13:3, Matt 18:3? In 9-12 he lists examples of faith - but yet again they're all from the O.T - surely an example from the Gospels would be more appropriate? In 16 he refers to Jesus' humility and one would expect him to refer to his birth in a stable or suchlike, but instead he quotes from the O.T again (Isa 53). In chap 17, he speaks of examples dressed in animal skins who announce the coming of Christ.

The obvious example of this would be John the Baptist (Matt 3:4), but Clement does not do this, but rather lists the O.T prophets Elijah and Ezekiel. It is very clear that although the Gospels emerged in the last decade of the 1st century CE, they took a lengthy period of time to be circulated and/or accepted.

With regard to the eyewitness testimony for Jesus' existence, there is certainly a problem. It is amazing that anything up to 70(100?), 000 people saw Jesus, but no one compiled an eyewitness account. Mark was obviously not an eyewitness due to his errors concerning chronological, historical, geographical and theological matters in 1st. cent Palestine; Matt and Luke have to use Mark as their base (which they obviously would not have done if they were eyewitnesses), and in John (Which even the church only hesitantly accepted into the canon) the account of Jesus' life and ministry is at variance with the Synoptic record, e.g., the timing of the Temple-clearing and the last supper, etc., in relation to the Passover. John also reports situations e.g., expulsions from the synagogue (16:2) which did not occur until after 90 CE (i.e. Rabbi Gamaliel II's official cursing prayer of the 'Minim' in ca. 90 CE). In the case of Paul, he gives virtually no detail about Jesus' earthly life, other than he was a descendent of David, was crucified and was raised by God. If Romans, a genuinely Pauline letter, is examined to discern Paul's knowledge of Jesus' earthly life, the silence becomes most apparent:-

- (1) Jesus was a Jew/descended from David (1:3, 15:8,12);
- (2) Jesus was human (8:3);
- (3) His blood was shed (3:25, 5:9);
- (4) Jesus suffered/died/was crucified (5:6,8,10,15, 6:3,4,5,6,8, 8:17, 14:15);
- (5) Jesus rose from the dead (1:4, 4:24,25, 6:4,5,9,10, 8:11,34, 10:7,9, 14:9):

As can be seen, the same few details are repeated over and over again. In the letters that are genuinely accepted as being written by Paul there is no specific reference to the parents of Jesus, and certainly not a virgin birth; his place of birth or the area in which his ministry took place is not mentioned either; 'Of Nazareth' is never used; the details supplied by Paul give no indication whatsoever of the time or place of Jesus' earthly existence. Paul never refers to Jesus' trial before a Roman official. He does not appear to even know who crucified Jesus - in 1 Cor 2:8 he refers to the death of Christ by 'rulers of the age' - this hardly fits a tin pot prefect called Pilate (this term really denotes supernatural spirits - 2 Cor 4:4, Col 2:15). Paul never refers to Jerusalem as the place of Jesus' execution and never mentions John the Baptist, Judas, or Peter's denials (This would have been quite pertinent in combating Cephas/Peter at Antioch - Gal 2:11-17. Paul's position was apparently being threatened by Peter and despite calling him a hypocrite, he does not allude to his three denials of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, e.g. Mark 14:30 pars). The only chronological reference to Jesus in the Pauline corpus is in 1 Tim 6:13 and this letter is widely accepted as post-Pauline. Furthermore it appears to be a non-Pauline insertion from a baptismal creed.

(* Although some argue that Paul's reference in 1 Thess 2:14-15 shows he knew that the Jews crucified Christ (this of course is incorrect - the Gospels portray the Romans as being responsible), this reference is clearly to God's vengeance on the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE - therefore it has to be an interpolation as 1 Thess is generally accepted as having been composed ca. 55 CE.

Paul suggests that miracles might be expected wherever a Christian mission went, for he includes the working of them among 'the gifts of the Spirit' (1 Cor 12:10, 28) and himself claimed to have won converts by 'the power of signs and wonders' (Rom 15:19), but he never makes any mention of Jesus having been a miracle-worker.

Among the signs of a true apostle, he lists 'signs and wonders and mighty works' (2 Cor 12:12); the striking feature is that he fails to mention that Jesus is reported as having done on an extensive scale in his earthly life. Another striking feature is that whilst the Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus as an ethical teacher, there is no suggestion of this in Paul's letters. Paul is certainly not indifferent to ethical problems and on several occasions his letters contain a sizeable amount of ethical instruction. On only one occasion does he represent Jesus as having made an ethical injunction and this is in 1 Cor 7:10 when Paul discusses the subject of divorce. The Gospel 'parallel' to this is Mark 10:11-12 (Matt is simply following Mark), but there is a difficulty even here as some reject this as authentic as Jesus refers to women divorcing their husbands - something that was not possible in Palestine. Some have argued that this statement was assigned to Jesus through Paul quoting a Christian prophet (himself?) through whom the risen Lord was speaking and it was then utilized by the author of Mark who placed it in the mouth of Jesus whilst on earth, but was careless in not realizing that its context was Gentile rather than Palestinian. It is clear from such early Christian writings as the Didache that as late as the end of the first century Christian prophets were viewed as being channels of communication for the risen Lord.

Paul was content to suffer weakness, insults, humiliation, persecution and hardship (2 Cor 12:10) adding that he entreated the readers by the 'meekness and gentleness of Christ' (2 Cor 10:1). He stated that he imitated Christ (1 Cor 11:1) and that his whole existence was 'to know nothing...except Jesus Christ and him crucified' (1 Cor 2:2) and then goes on to say he was with his readers in 'weakness, much fear and trembling' (1 Cor 2:3). If this is Paul's 'imitation' of Christ, then it is a far cry from the Jesus of the Gospels and particularly the picture of Jesus portrayed in John. It would seem that Paul thought Jesus led a humble inconspicuous life that went completely unnoticed by the world.

Other situations arise in Paul's writing that suggests a lack of knowledge concerning Jesus' supposed earthly life. He clearly was unaware of Jesus' command not to go to the Gentiles (Matt 10:5) in Rom 11:13, and in Rom 8:26, he states 'for we do not know how to pray as we ought' suggesting that he knew nothing about Jesus' instructions in Matt 5:7-13, Luke 11:14.

The instructions regarding baptism by Jesus given in Matt 28:19 were also apparently unknown to Paul (1 Cor 1:17).

The person of Paul was that of someone who believed that God was now revealing secrets or mysteries; these terms frequently arise in Paul's letters, e.g., 1 Cor 2:7, 13:2, 14:2,, 15:51, with 'revealed' or similar also arising frequently, e.g. Rom 1:17,18, 8:18, 16:25, 1 Cor 2:10,13, 3:13, 2 Cor 12:1. Paul believed that he had seen the risen Jesus (1 Cor 15:8) and he had spoken directly to him (2 Cor 12:8-9); he had experienced ecstatic states (2 Cor 12:1-4, 1 Cor 14:18) and God was now revealing previously-hidden information (1 Cor 2:10,12-13, 7:40).

A question therefore arises: did Paul's scant knowledge about Jesus arise through his belief that the risen Lord was now communicating with and through him, along with other Christian prophets, or from information gleaned from earthly companions and eyewitnesses of the earthly Jesus? One passage in which Paul clearly refers to a historical event in Jesus' earthly life, i.e., the last supper, is 1 Cor 11:23-26. However this passage begins "For I received from the Lord..." and indicates this information was transmitted directly to Paul from the risen Christ, rather than from the apostles. Consequently a question arises, i.e. why this should be as Paul had met the apostles (Acts 9:27, Gal 1:18-19, 2:2, 9) and would have been given this information by them. By this is only if these "apostles" had in fact accompanied the earthly Jesus rather than being as Paul, i.e., Christians who were receiving information direct from the risen Lord. But in view of Paul's lack of knowledge, it would seem that these "apostles" also knew nothing of Jesus' supposed earthly life.

Reference to Jesus' resurrection, rather than his earthly life appears in 1 Cor 15:3-8, when Paul lists the resurrection appearances (apparently in chronological order); these bear no resemblance to the Gospel ones and reference to an appearance to 'all the twelve' whilst the Gospels report Judas' suicide before the resurrection again suggests a lack of information; Paul's mention of a post-resurrection appearance to five hundred brethren at one time (15:6) is quite extraordinary as it would be inexplicable for the Gospel writers to have omitted this event if they had known of it.

The empty tomb, nor Jerusalem itself is ever mentioned by Paul; his several visits to Jerusalem, recorded in both Acts and Gal. surely would have brought him into contact with the empty tomb; the failure to mention this, which surely would have had great significance for Paul due to his preoccupation with Jesus' death and resurrection, may have been due, unlike the Gospels reporting a physical resurrection, to a belief in Jesus being raised as a spirit (1 Cor 15:44, 45, 50).

The 1 Cor 15:3-8 passages does not link Jesus to any specific historical time; it simply reports that he died, was buried, was raised, and had appeared to a number of people alive in Paul's time. There is no suggestion whatsoever that these appearances occurred immediately after his death/resurrection. Whilst the Gospels have Jesus appearing as a resurrected physical human being to his apostles and Acts having Jesus appearing in a totally different form to Paul (i.e. after his ascension), there is no such suggestion here; Paul does not differentiate in any way between the earlier appearances in 1 Cor 15:3-7 and the one to him (15:8).

It appears from this that he believed all those listed in 15:3-7 had experienced the same vision as he had done - they are certainly not made to be companions of Jesus in his earthly life and Paul appears to think of the others who are listed as experiencing a supernatural vision as he had done. The reason for Jesus now appearing was apparently because of the approaching end which was imminent (1 Cor 7:29, 15:23-24, 1 Thess 4:14-17, etc, etc).

The baffling silence is accounted for in a number of ways; the conservative Catholic theologian Xavier Leon-Dufour says of the matter:

"Why do these epistles...pay so little attention to the events in the public life of our Lord, and why do they not frequently cite his actual words?..... To some Paulinists the earthly existence

of Jesus...was meaningless as it is seen as a convenient way of teaching simple-minded men about the spiritual experience of the first Christians...Some go further and maintain that Christianity is not essentially concerned with a unique happening in past time, but is a vision in which an experience is crystallized.....".

Dufour believes there are some passages where there is an 'echo' of Jesus words, e.g. 1 Thess 4:15-17, but some argue that rather than this (and a few others) being an 'echo' of Jesus' words, the situation was that the messages imparted by Christian prophets 'speaking in the name of the risen Lord' in Paul's time were collected and fed back into Jesus' time and put into his mouth lips during his earthly ministry.

It is argued that Paul had no need to refer to events in Jesus' earthly life when writing to Christian communities as they would have already known the Gospel story; however, Paul's constant failure to invoke the words of Jesus to support his arguments suggests it was rather a case of being unable to do this, rather than not needing or wanting to do this. There are many occasions when Jesus' words are so very applicable, but Paul simply ignores them. For example, in 1 Cor 7, Paul argues about the value of celibacy, but the words of Jesus in Matt 19:12, which are totally relevant, are not cited.

To say either that Paul was only concerned with Jesus' death, resurrection and present role in heaven, and not so much his earthly life, or that his readers already knew Jesus' life and Paul had no need to repeat details of this simply does not explain Paul's astonishing silence.

Other examples of Paul's failure to invoke Jesus' words are:-

Rom 2:1, 14:13/Matt 7:1, Luke 6:37.
Rom 12:14, 17/Matt 5:44, Luke 6:38.
Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14/Matt 22:39-40, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27.
Rom 13:6/Mark 12:17.
Rom 14:14/Mark 7:18-19.
1 Cor 6:7/Matt 5:39-40.
1 Cor 15:35-55*/Mark 12:25.
1 Thess 4:9/John 15:17.

* In 1 Cor 15, Paul uses the O.T. rather than Jesus' statements in the Gospels i.e., 15:45 (Gen 2:7), 15:54 (Isa 25:8) and 15:55 (Hos 13:14).

Paul argues that the 'spirits of this age' will be put down at Christ's second coming (1 Cor 15:24-25) - he appears to be ignorant of the fact that spirits were overcome by Jesus in his earthly life (e.g. Mark 3:11) and furthermore this was when Satan himself was judged and cast out (John 12:31).

It is very clear that Paul was greatly influenced by the Wisdom tradition and the expectations of Jewish belief which arose in the first century BCE. In fact a striking similarity can be found between Paul's letters and this literature. A summary of some parts of the Wisdom of Solomon, the Book of Enoch, Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus, which mention Wisdom, 'the virtuous man', the Lord and the 'Word' produces the following (these all pre-date Christianity).

Wisdom is the sustainer and governor of the universe (Wis. 8:1, 9:4) who comes to dwell among men but is rejected by most. 1 Enoch states that after being humiliated on earth, wisdom then returned to heaven. In Wisdom there is mention of the 'just man' also, who is persecuted and condemned to a 'shameful death' (2:20); he is tested and then has immortality bestowed upon him (3:5); he is called a son of God (5:5). In 1 Enoch, the son of man shall bring salvation to the Gentiles; when he comes, he will come with angels and everyone will worship him; he will then destroy sinners.

In the upshot, Paul's view of Jesus appears to be wholly based on this line of thinking. In the case of 1 Cor 1:23-25, this comes very close to actually calling the supernatural personage

that became Jesus, 'Wisdom'. In view of what information is available, it seems what little Paul knew about Jesus appears to be based on (a) Current Jewish beliefs concerning wisdom, etc, (b) Revelations that he believed he was receiving from the resurrected messiah who had died sometime in the past and was now revealing himself just before the end of the age.

Additionally, there seems to be no pagan evidence for Jesus' existence either. Reference to his life does not occur until well into the second century and even then the writers seem to be merely repeating Christian statements about Jesus (e.g. Tacitus in 120 CE). What is really striking is that the same ignorance about Jesus' earthly life is found in most other N.T writings, e.g. in 1 Pet, readers are told to love one another, have unswerving faith and put away malice - but the writer never quotes Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount - instead he quotes the O.T.

With regard to Paul and the origins for Jesus, it does seem that Jesus' 'teachings' overall were borrowed from the O.T. and occasionally from elsewhere. It also seems that messages received 'from the risen Lord' by Christian prophets in trance were fed back into Jesus' earthly life. The Didache, a Christian writing of ca. 1st century (probably from Syria) writes of Christian prophets; "Welcome them as the Lord...Every missionary who comes to you should be welcomed as the Lord...While a prophet is uttering words in a trance, you are on no account to subject him to any tests or verifications - this is the sin that shall never be forgiven...They exhibit the manners and conduct of the Lord.....".

Here it can be seen these prophets were treated with the same respect as Jesus himself; what they said was treated as coming direct from Jesus and was not to be questioned. Furthermore this feature is found elsewhere, e.g. B. E. Beck (Senior Tutor and Methodist minister, New Testament Studies, Wesley House, Cambridge), in his Reading the New Testament Today:-

"Sayings attributed to Jesus in the gospels were used by Christians without acknowledgement, but the possibility cannot be ruled out that the reverse process has occurred - maxims in general use, from whatever source, have been mistakenly attributed to Jesus, e.g., Matt 6:34, 7:6. Apparently Christian prophets spoke in the name of the risen Lord, that is, on his behalf. Were such sayings treasured as those of the earthly Jesus? Was any real distinction made between them when both were felt to express the mind of the Lord who had now risen and was still acting through his church? If the distinction was not sharply drawn, what was to prevent a saying of the Lord, delivered through a prophet, being attributed to the Lord in his earthly ministry?....."

In the book 1 and 2 Thessalonians by Ernest Best (Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism, University of Glasgow) it is stated:-

"....There were many prophets among the early Christians; such prophets may have passed on sayings of the exalted Lord to his church, and the church have made little distinction between these sayings and those of the earthly Jesus; confirmation of this may be seen by the ascription by Paul of sayings of Jesus to the Lord....."

Paul's letters are usually dated 50-60 CE, but by the time the Gospels were written (after ca. 90 CE), the 'apostles' were made to be companions of Jesus whilst he lived on earth - and yet there is no such mention of this whatsoever in pre-90 CE writings; Paul certainly never suggests this: he appears to liken them to himself, receiving messages from the risen Christ who had lived 'sometime in the past'.

In Gal 2:11 Paul has a fierce argument with Peter, but he makes no reference to Peter's denials of Jesus as the Gospels relate which would crush Peter's arrogance here; in the same way, Paul has to labour over the problem of unclean foods (e.g., Rom 14:14-15, 1 Cor 8:7-13) even though Jesus had supposedly spoken on this matter already (Matt 15:10). The explanation might be that Jesus never spoke these words, but rather, a Christian

prophet received this information supposedly from the risen Lord and the words were fed back to Jesus' earthly life which by 90 CE had been located ca. 30 CE.

The reasons for this are numerous, but very briefly, it was necessary to locate Jesus in history and as John the Baptist could be seen as 'fulfilling' a supposed O.T prophecy (Malachi 3:1), Jesus became tied to this period (Note that Josephus the Jewish historian writes of the Baptist but he never mentions any Jesus associated with him). As it was believed that a foreign power would have killed Jesus, it seemed sensible to presume this Christ-figure had lived in the time of Pilate's prefectship. In sum, the events of ca. 30 CE provided an excellent background to when Christians believed Jesus would have lived.

As far as Jesus being connected with Nazareth, most commentators (even Christian ones) admit he was called this in error - i.e., his title was Jesus the Nazarene which had nothing to do with Nazareth but only meant 'Holy' or 'devout' or 'Separated one'. Although the word 'Nazareth' is only mentioned once in Mark (in 1:9), the translators have unfortunately translated all references as 'of Nazareth' when most of them do not say 'of Nazareth' but 'Nazarene' (1:24, 10:47, 14:67), which, as stated, refers to Jesus' sect or way of life, rather than a geographical location anywhere. Matt and Luke used Mark and interpreted this as meaning 'of Nazareth', when quite clearly it did not. One reason for this 'change-of-meaning' was no doubt due to seeing Jesus as a rebel against orthodox Judaism and the South (i.e. Judea) was considered to be fairly conservative, but Galilee in the North was notorious for producing rebels (e.g. Judas the Galilean led the famous 6 CE revolt).

Therefore, logically they presumed he must have come from there. Also, and finally, commentators admit there are 'difficulties' in bridging the gap between the two terms, i.e., how 'of Nazareth' is obtained from the original 'Nazarene' term. Furthermore it appears these Christian prophets (called 'apostles' - surely evidence that 'apostle' originally meant someone receiving direct revelations from Christ in heaven and not someone who had been a companion of the earthly Jesus) were not all transmitting the same information from him - 2 Cor 11:4,5,13.

It has to be borne in mind that there were apparently "many Jesus" - i.e., different Christian prophets were receiving different revelations from the figure they believed to be this person. This may explain why Jesus contradicts himself in the Gospels, e.g. in Matt 5:16 he says "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works....", but seconds later (Matt 6:1), says "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen of them" - and he then goes on to say all good works must be done secretly and not to be observed by other people. How could one historical person have spoken like this? It can only be explained by statements from different sources that is, Christian prophets relaying on revelations they believed they were receiving, and these being combined into the one figure of Jesus.

With regard to Paul's consistent and continual failure to locate Jesus in any chronological period, some argue that the reference to James being 'the Lord's brother' by Paul in Gal 1:19 indicates that Paul knew that Jesus' life was in that period of time, but far too much has been built up upon this one isolated statement. For example, the statement may have a theological, rather than a sociological meaning, viz. it is a term to denote something other than a literal flesh-and blood brother.

In fact Robertson suggests that the term really referred to a group of messianists that had a particular school of thought; Brandon suggests it could simply mean a 'principal servant' (which of course would suit the leader of the Jerusalem church). It does appear that in Paul's time 'brother/brethren' was a very common term for members of a particular group of people, rather than members of a physical family.

1 Cor 1:11-13 does imply that such groups existed within the church - it does seem from this that there were particular groups of people, e.g. those who were a 'Christ-party', and a member of this could be called "the Lord's brother".

Furthermore, as the Gospels also have Jesus referring to his non-family disciples as 'brethren' e.g., Matt 28:9-10 and John 20:17, it does appear that a blood relative is not necessarily meant by the term 'brother/brethren' in the N.T. Some go as far as believing that Jesus' family, as briefly referred to in the Gospels, were in fact 'created' by the Gospel writers purely for anti-docetic reasons. It is also strange that the author of Acts never mentions the James of Acts 15 as Jesus' brother, although he presumably knew Mark which named James as a brother of Jesus.

Finally, it is necessary to comment on the argument that maintains that as Josephus and Tacitus, both non-Christians, refer to Jesus, this surely proves that he was a historical personage.

These references are very brief fleeting statements concerning a Jesus by (1) Josephus (XVIII, 3.3), ca. 93 CE. and (2) Tacitus (Anals., xv, 44), ca. 120 CE. However, serious questions arise.

In the case of Josephus, (i) Why do no Christians up to the 4th cent. Refer to Josephus' priceless remark that 'Jesus was the Christ'? (ii) Why does the Christian apologist Origen (185-254 CE), who knew of Josephus' writings, categorically state that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Christ when in the passage Josephus refers to Jesus by this very title? (iii) How could a strict Pharisaic Jew make such a statement? (iv) Why is it written in the same style as Luke? (v) Why does it look like an insertion in the narrative and appears to interrupt the flow, not following on from what is said before and not leading into what is said afterwards? (vi) Why does Josephus not say more about Jesus if he did really believe 'he was the Christ'?

Additionally, it should be noted that firstly, a host of eminent Christian theologians/scholars who firmly believe in Jesus' historicity reject that it was written by Josephus. Secondly, why should this be genuine when other copies of Josephus's Antiquities have been discovered which are heavily interpolated with Christian references? And thirdly, the very fact that it does appear to be a Christian interpolation surely suggests there was a problem, as why should Christians feel there was a need to even do this?

In the case of Tacitus, it is never clear why this passage is even referred to; it was written nearly a century after Jesus' supposed existence and is therefore hardly 'contemporary'. If he is quoting a historical fact, then why does he make the same error that Christians also made about Pilate, i.e. calling him a procurator when he was in fact a prefect. Trilling, an orthodox Christian, comments that Tacitus was saying what 'could have reached him from any educated contemporary' and 'is no more than what could be learned anywhere in Rome'. In fact when Pliny wrote to Trajan (ca. 112 CE) he admits that his information about Christians was obtained by questioning Christians - not by using any historical record or common knowledge. Tacitus is undoubtedly doing the same. Tacitus does not refer to Jesus as 'Jesus' but 'Christ' - i.e., the title ('Anointed/Messiah') that Christians gave Jesus. He could have hardly found this reference in any records he consulted (which would have therefore read: - 'We executed the Christ today' !). It is obvious that he is only repeating what he had heard that Christians believed.

Therefore, to conclude, in the matter of eyewitness and contemporary accounts to Jesus' earthly life, there is a striking absence. The situation is adequately summed up by Professor Fuller, Professor of New Testament, Union Theological Seminary, New York, in his A Critical Introduction to the New Testament:-

"Of the 27 books of the New Testament only the authentic Pauline epistles are, strictly speaking, the testimony of an apostolic witness. And even Paul...was not a witness of the historical Jesus. Since the earliest witnesses wrote nothing...there is not a single book in the New Testament which is the direct work of an eyewitness of the historical Jesus..." (p.197).

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The Dark Side of the Character of Jesus of Nazareth

<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2002/08/dark-side-of-character-of-jesus-of.php>

By Wm. F. Hennes

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Chapter 1 Jesus Defiled

"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46a)

This was spoken by Jesus, who was undoubtedly ceremonially unclean much of the time. I will deal with only three areas: touching a leper, touching a dead body, and being touched by an unclean person. First some scriptures about the uncleanness of leprosy.

"And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and everyone that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell." (Num. 5:1-3)

"Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it is wherewith a man shall be defiled, and it be hidden from him, when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty..., And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing." (Lev. 5:3,5)

These scriptures are pretty clear that a person with leprosy was unclean or defiled, and that if anyone touched a person who was unclean, if and when he knew it, he was guilty of sin. He then had to offer an animal sacrifice, etc., for this cleansing (see Lev. 5:6-13).

Now consider Jesus of Nazareth.

"And, behold, there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matt. 8:2,3)

Second; a person who touched a dead body became unclean or defiled.

"He who toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days." (Num. 19:11)

Now consider Jesus.

"While he spoke these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshiped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live... But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose." (Matt. 9:18,25)

Third; whoever was touched by an unclean person, was defiled by being touched.

"And if a woman has an issue, and her issue in her flesh is blood, she shall be put apart seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the evening." (Lev. 15:19)
(See also v.v. 20-27)

So, whoever happened to be touched by an unclean woman, themselves became defiled until the evening. Consider Jesus.

"And a woman, having an issue of blood twelve years,... came behind him and touched the border of his garment; and immediately her issue of blood stanchd... And Jesus said, somebody hath touched me; for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." (Luke 8:43,44,46)

The reason the woman was afraid, and trembling, is because she had caused him to be defiled or unclean, by touching him.

Perhaps the reason Jesus spent so many nights outside Jerusalem, was because he was ceremonially unclean much of the time, by touching the unclean. Look back at the words of Lev. 5:3 again please.

"... whatsoever uncleanness it is wherewith a man shall be defiled,..."

This simply means, if a person touched any kind of uncleanness, it made them defiled, and when, or if, they knew it, they became guilty. Then verse 5 says:

"And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing."

Then he was to bring his trespass offering, for his sin, which he had sinned, which was a lamb, or a kid goat, or two turtle-doves, or two pigeons, or one tenth ephed of flour.

"And the priest shall make atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him,..." (v. 13)

Jesus intentionally touched many unclean people, so did he sin? Was he guilty? Did he bring a trespass offering? Was he forgiven?

Here is the stinger for those who will say that Jesus didn't have to keep these laws because he was the son of God, and thereby not bound to the laws of God. He said, "And he that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29)

I suppose that includes touching lepers, dead bodies, changing, by adding to and taking from the law, destroying private property, etc.

Chapter 2 Jesus' Third Passover

In the Bible, under the law of Moses, there were three festivals that ALL males were required to attend.

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Passover)... And the Feast of Harvest,... and the Feast of Ingathering,... three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God." (Ex. 23:14-17)

There were several stipulations that must be observed. One, they must not keep it at their homes but it must be kept at Jerusalem.

"Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates,... But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in,..." (Deut. 16:5,6)

This place was Jerusalem, and they also must go there and give money.

"...; and they must not appear before the LORD thy God empty. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee." (Deut. 16:16,17)

Also, they must not refuse to go and attend the Passover.

"But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth (refuses) to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people; because he brought not the offering of the LORD in it's appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." (Num. 9:13)

To summarize, all males must go to Jerusalem to give an offering, and if they refused to go and keep the Passover, they were cut off from the people and they bore their sin of it. Now, if this is clear to you, you now have a big problem. In a book written by a defender of the faith, entitled, "Baker's Harmony of the Gospels", edited by Benjamin Dacies, on page 67, part V, concerning the third Passover during Jesus' ministry, he says in a foot note; "This Passover was not celebrated by our Lord in Jerusalem because the rulers were seeking to kill him, and his time had not yet come (John 7:1 comp. with Luke 9:51); see note z on # 64."

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1)

However, on the fourth Passover;

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51)

This was nearing the fourth Passover, but he did not attend the third Passover for fear of the Jews. Now, do you realize the magnitude of this? Jesus refused to go to a Passover feast. You may say as also said the gospel writer, "his time was not yet come", and that sounds noble, but according to John 7:1, he was afraid to go to Judaea, and under the law, he sinned by refusing to go where he was required to go. There was nothing in the law allowing for absence because of fear.

I want to reinforce the fact of Jesus not attending this third Passover. Concerning this time of the third Passover;

"After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias... And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh." (John 6:1)

"And he took them and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida." (Luke 9:10)

"... and entering into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum." (John 6:17)

Then the next day he had a lengthy discourse with the people in (6:22-71). Then we come to John 7:1 where it says,

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1)

Now a little geography. Bethsaida is at the north end of the sea of Galilee and Capernaum is on the northwest coast of that sea. Both cities are about 80 air miles from Jerusalem where the Passover was to take place shortly ('was nigh'). A good day's journey on foot would be about 20 miles a day. That would be something like a five day journey, even if he had left immediately, but he didn't. Notice John 7:1 again, this is after a couple of days have elapsed after it says, "the feast of the Jews was nigh." He didn't go.

Chapter 3 Building the Prophet's tombs

"Woe unto you! For ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchers." (Luke 11:47,48)

Building a tomb for someone whom your ancestors have killed certainly does not mean you approve of the killing. That would be like a group of people who built Lincoln's tomb, but that does not mean they approved of John Wilkes Booth killing him. One has absolutely nothing to do with the other. Logic must not have been among Jesus' strong points. Another thing, what prophets did the Jews kill?

Chapter 4 You fool!

"...; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matt. 5:22c)

This very strong judgment was given by Jesus no less. First, the meaning of the Greek word "fool."

In Strong's Gr. Lex. # 3474; mo-ras'; dull or stupid. Here in Matt. Jesus is telling us that if anyone calls someone a fool, they are in danger of going to hell. This may be good advice, but Jesus himself should have practiced what he preached.

"Ye fools and blind; for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?" (Matt. 23:17)

"Ye fools, and blind, for which is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" (v. 19)

Here Jesus is calling the scribes and Pharisees, fools. The word "fools", in these two verses is the exact same word he used in Matt. 5:22, where he said the name caller is in danger of hell's fire. He called people fool in other places also, however, he used a different and much stronger word in those places, but it was translated fools, in English just the same.

"Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?" (Luke 11:40)

This word "fools" is # 878; mindless, as in stupid, ignorant, etc.

"But god said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee;..." (Luke 12:20)

This verse says Jesus said that the rich man was a fool. This "fool" is # 876; froth, as in slaver. The word slaver means, to slobber, to let saliva run or dribble, or drool. In other words, someone who is so retarded or stupid as to slobber and doesn't even have enough sense to swallow his saliva. He used another word for fool, which is # 453; unintelligent.

"then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" (Luke 24:25)

In conclusion, Jesus called individuals fools, but we must not. So, apparently Jesus was immune from this condemnation. Did this warning apply to everyone except himself?

Chapter 5 Fear not to Die

Jesus taught to don't fear those who may kill you.

"Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." (Luke 12:4)

However, he hid, fled and avoided death when necessary.

"After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1)

"Then took they up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (John 8:59)

"Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from there;..." (Matt. 12:14,15)

"Then from that day forth they took counsel together to put him to death. Jesus, therefore, walked no more openly among the Jews, but went from there unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples." (John 11:53,54)

"Therefore, they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand,..." (John 10:39)

Then again, in the garden, he prayed to God three times that "this cup" (this fate) may pass from him, nevertheless, not his will. And finally on the cross, he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

So, it's nice to say don't fear those who may kill you, but it's another thing when they really want to do it.

Chapter 6 A Historical Lie

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the father may be glorified in the son. If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14)

When has anyone performed a miracle equal to what Jesus supposedly did? Such as walking on water, healing the blind, healing withered arms, stilling a storm, multiplying food, raising the dead? Much less doing "greater works" than these. Also, what things that are asked in his name are done? He said "whatsoever" things. That means anything or everything. He said, "that will I do". In other words, whatsoever anyone asks for he will give it to them. Then he strengthened it by adding, "if you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." No questions about it, he will do it. Is this promise true? I have never seen it done.

Chapter 7 "I am... the Truth"

Did Jesus lie when he said, "..., the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." (Matt. 8:20)

The disciples asked him, "..., where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day." (John 1:38,39)

In Strong's Gr. Lex., for the two words, "dwelt", and "dwellest", the same word is used, which is # 3306; men'-c; to stay (in a given place, state, relation, or expectancy) abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry. So, did Jesus lie when he said he had no place to lay his head?

Did Jesus tell the truth about Lazarus?

"When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death,..." (John 11:4)

"Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." (v. 19)

Chapter 8 False Prophecies

In Matt. 16, Jesus is foretelling of his coming death in verse 21, then Peter rebukes him. Next Jesus tells of the cost of following him. In verse 27, he tells of the return of the Son of man.

"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt. 16:27)

This verse is clearly referring to the second advent of Jesus when he comes back to earth after the seven years of tribulation, which follows the rapture of the church.

"Verily, I say unto you, there are some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (v. 28)

It has been nearly 2,000 years and the rapture has not occurred, much less the tribulation and the second advent of Jesus' coming.

Jesus said concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple;

"...; and they shall not leave in thee (Jerusalem) one stone upon another,..."(Luke 19:44b)

And when his disciples mentioned the temple, he said the same,

"Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." (Matt. 24:2)

Today, nearly 2,000 years after this, there is, what is called the wailing wall, or the west wall, which is supposed to be the west wall of the temple's outer court, still standing, with each stone still upon another. It is said that the wailing wall is the only part of the ancient temple still standing.

"Nevertheless, I must walk today, and tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13:33)

Now, we all know the historical account of Jesus being condemned in Jerusalem and crucified out of the city. The truth is, a prophet did indeed perish out of Jerusalem.

When Peter asked Jesus what reward the twelve apostles could expect for forsaking all to follow him, Jesus said; "Verily, I say unto you that ye who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19:28)

Judas was one of those twelve who was there when Jesus said this. Surely, Judas was not going to be sitting on a throne, judging one of the tribes of Israel! If Jesus was all knowing he would have known Judas would betray him and would die by his own hand, lost.

Jesus here gives the only sign of his messiahhood.

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt. 12:40)

If Jesus was crucified on Friday, as we are told, and buried quickly before sundown on that Friday, and arose early on Sunday morning, before daybreak, or Saturday night; there is no way one can get three days and three nights out of that. For if we count backward from Sunday morning, three full days and three full nights, you cannot arrive a Friday sundown.

Supposedly, on Palm Sunday, when Jesus entered Jerusalem, "And the multitude that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna, to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matt. 21:9)

Then, just a couple of days later, Jesus laments over Jerusalem, and says; "For I say unto you (Jerusalem), ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." (Matt. 23:39)

Besides the people of Jerusalem saying that phrase just two days before this prediction, the next time the people of Jerusalem saw Jesus, they did not say the blessing, but rather, "crucify him".

Jesus gave a promise to his followers, to encourage them, no doubt, that, if they wanted to be his disciples and leave everything and follow him, they will be repaid 100% in this life.

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mark 10:28-30)

First, Jesus promised this to all, and it is to apply in this life. This promise is to anyone who will leave his house or lands for Jesus or the gospel, of gaining 100 more houses or 100 more lands, in this life. How many young people have left their families, houses, or lands, to become pastors, missionaries, and evangelists, etc., then lived their lives and died without gaining 100 houses or 100 more lands, as they were promised by Jesus. The only conclusion we can come to is, the promise was a lie. They did their part by faith, but Jesus did not do his part.

Here is a prophecy by Jesus that hasn't been fulfilled in 2,000 years.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." (John 12:32,33)

He was, apparently, lifted up (crucified), but it is also evident from history, that "all men" have not been drawn to him. There have been millions who have lived and died and have not even

heard or known of someone called Jesus who was crucified. They were not drawn to Jesus as he said he will draw all men unto him.

In Deut. 18:22, is the means of determining whether a prophet is a true prophet of God, or a false prophet.

"When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously; thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Deut. 18:22)

Jesus, who made these prophecies, obviously said them presumptuously as a false prophet, so, we need not fear him.

Chapter 9 Then Shall the End Come

Jesus made a profound statement about the end of the world.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14)

When the gospel has been preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, then shall the end come. What would you think about this if you suddenly found out the gospel has already been preached in all the world? Even 2,000 years ago? What would that do to your faith in this promise of the end coming? Read and weep!

"..., of which ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit,..." (Col. 1:5,6)

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature that is under heaven,..." (Col. 1:23)

"But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom. 10:18)

There you have it. Did Jesus' prophecy come to pass as he said it, or not? If these three scriptures are true, when did the end come? But, if these three scriptures are not true, why are they in the HOLY BIBLE?

Chapter 10 But I Say Unto You

Three places in the O.T., God instructed man to not add anything to his laws, or take anything away from them. This is what God the Father said.

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2)

"Whatsoever thing I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it." (Deut. 12:32)

"Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto those who put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." (Prov. 30:5,6)

From these verses it is pretty clear we are not to add or subtract anything from the law or the words of God. If anyone does, he is reprov'd and is a liar. Right? This is pretty serious stuff, because if you will be open-minded enough to read farther, you will see that Jesus of Nazareth did just what those verses say not to do. Observe what he said.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment; But I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matt. 5:21,22)

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old, thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (v.v 27,28)

"It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." (v.v.31,32)

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old, thou shalt not forswear (perjure) thyself, but shalt perform unto the LORD thine oaths; but I say unto you, swear not at all,... but let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay; for what ever is more than these cometh of evil.: (v.v.33,34a, 37)

In the law a person was permitted by God to swear an oath, but they must perform it. Jesus adds to this law by saying we cannot do it. He canceled God's law.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil,..." (v.v.38,39)

"They say unto him Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou?... (Jesus said) He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her... Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." (John 8:4,5,7,11)

In the law, the common people were to do the stoning, which was Israel's governmental means of execution. If they waited until they could find a sinless person to administer capital punishment, there wouldn't have been any. Also, if God(the father) condemned adultery, why wouldn't Jesus(the son), who was supposed to be one with the father, do the same?

"It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the father that sent me beareth witness of me." (John 8:17,18)

The law did require the witness of two men to be true, but that was two other people. Even when God in heaven witnessed the crime, he did not testify. He wanted two other people besides the victim to testify. Remember what God said?

"But the prophet, who shall presume to speak a word in my name, with I have not commanded him to speak, or who shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die." (Deut. 18:20)

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish anything from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your god which I command you." (Deut. 4:2)

Jesus did add to and diminish from the law, and even canceled some of them. He also died young.

Chapter 11 Some Will See Him Coming

Matthew, Mark and Luke record a prophecy made by Jesus concerning the second Advent or when he comes back to earth to judge the world.

"For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily, I say unto you, there are some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:27,28)

"... there be some of them that stand here, who shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1)

"But I tell you the truth, there are some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of god." (Luke 9:27)

Here we have a false prophecy by Jesus. He said there were some people who were there at that time (about 30 A.D.) who would see the son of man (Jesus) coming with power in his kingdom, before they died. It has been nearly 2,000 years now, and he still hasn't come.

Chapter 12 This Generation

Jesus is predicting the future events that will come to pass. He is talking of the great tribulation in Matt. 24:21-28.

"For then shall be great tribulation,..." (v.21)

then he speaks of after the great tribulation, etc. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days..." (v.29)

"And then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven;..." (v.v.30-32)

Then he said; "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (v.v.33,34)

All these things, are -- sun, moon and stars are darkened, heaven shaken(v.29) -- sign of son of man in heaven, all the earth mourn, see the son of man coming with power and great glory(v.30)-- sending of angels to gather the elect(v.31) -- parable of fig tree(v.32) -- then the two verses in question. That generation did pass away, and many, many more, and all these things still have not happened.

Chapter 13 The Mustard Seed

One well known scientific blunder by Jesus is found in Matt. 13.

"... the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard see, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which, indeed, is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches of it." (Matt. 13:31,32)

I would think that someone who is not knowledgeable of botany, would not speak on the subject, for three reasons. One, a mustard seed is not the least or smallest of all seeds, for the orchid seed is smaller, and a few others; two, when grown it is not the greatest or largest of all herbs; three, a mustard seed does not grow up and become a tree.

Now, if this statement is not true, then Jesus lied, or, if he did not lie on purpose, hen he lacked knowledge and was not Divine God.

The importance of Jesus' statement as a problem is stated by Charles Ryrie, in his book, 'Inerrance', page 94, where he said, "In his parable of the mustard seed the Lord said that the mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds. Is that plainly an erroneous statement, since botanically the mustard seed is not the smallest? Before jumping to that conclusion, remember that it was stated by Jesus Christ. If he spoke a lie, how could he have been

sinless? This is not simply a small factual discrepancy; if the statement is not true, then it proves something about the one who made it, and that becomes a serious doctrinal matter. You cannot separate this history from its doctrinal ramification."

Chapter 14 "Slay Them Before Me"

In Luke 19, there is a parable spoken by Jesus, and dealing only with the citizens, it says:

"He said, therefore, a certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, we will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass that, when he was returned, having received the kingdom,... But those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring here, and slay them before me." (Luke 19:12,14,15,27)

Now, since Jesus is supposed to be the nobleman, and he went away, and is supposed to return, and judge; isn't his judgment a little harsh? It is out of character with other verses that supposedly describe Jesus, such as;

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,... for if ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your father, who is in heaven, is perfect." (Matt. 5:43,44,46,48)

If Jesus was such a "nobleman," who taught others to "forgive," and to "love your enemies," and "do good to them that hate you," and to be "perfect"; why, pray tell, did he liken himself to the nobleman who was hated by the citizens who did not want him to reign over them, and then called them before him and had them killed? Is that practicing what you preach, or not?

Chapter 15 Practice What You Preach

Sometimes Jesus taught one thing and practiced the opposite. Here are some examples.

"But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Matt. 5:39)

However, when evil seemed to be dominant, Jesus acted differently, such as;

"And he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money, sitting.

And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changer's money, and overthrew the tables;..." (John 2:14,15)

He taught to love your enemies, to bless them, to do good to them.

"But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Matt. 5:44)

But when it came to practicing this good teaching he called his enemies, hypocrites seven times (Matt. 23:13-15,23,25,27,29), blind five times (v.16,17,19,14,16), fools twice (v.17,19), white washed tombs (v.27), snakes and vipers (v.33), killers (v.34,35). That doesn't sound to me like what he said we should do for our enemies, does it?

Jesus taught us to respect others, to serve others, and to honor others, but that isn't the way he reacted to the high priest.

"The High Priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, where the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why asketh thou me? Ask them who heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said. And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the High Priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:19-25)

This little debate doesn't sound like Jesus' teachings. He was obviously argumentative and defensive.

Jesus then proceeds to answer Pilate in an argumentative and defensive manner also.

"Pilate... called Jesus and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews" Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" (John 18:33,34)

"Pilate, therefore, said unto him, Art thou King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." (v.37)

Pilate asked Jesus if he was the king of the Jews and he replied in our modern speech; Did you ask this on your own or did others prompt you? Pilate then asked him again, are you then a king? Jesus replied, you say I'm a king, that's what I was born to be, and why I'm here, that I should confirm truth and all who know the truth hear me.

You see, Pilate asked him a simple question, twice, but Jesus didn't answer the simple question, but was elusive and argumentative.

Chapter 16 A Friend of Jesus

The author of the book of John has recorded that Jesus made this conditional statement. Then in the next verse he said what he will do for his friends.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatever I command you." (John 15:13,14)

So, according to these two statements, Jesus laid down his life for you, if you are his friend, and you are his friend only if you do whatever he commands you to do. Now we need to see what all he commands you to do.

First, he commands the Great Commission found in Matt. 28:19,20. Then Jesus gives a "new commandment", even though this loving one another was already commanded in the law. (see Lev. 19:18,34) It is referred to several times in the N.T., as in 1 John 2:7; 11 John 5. Lastly, there are several other commands, such as what to do to be his disciple, i.e. forsaking everything you have to follow him, to believe on him, etc.

So, you are Jesus' friend, on one condition; you must do whatever he commands you. And according to John 15:13,14, he died only for his friends. So, are you saved? Do you do all he commands?

Chapter 17 Jesus Said Nothing in Secret

"Jesus answered him, I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple; where the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." (John 18:20)

It seems to me that if he ever taught a few private individuals, that would constitute teaching in secret or privately. In only Matthew's gospel alone, somewhere around one-fourth is private teachings. Matt. 10-11:1, he is teaching the twelve about how to evangelize, how to handle persecution. He even admitted to teaching in secret.

"What I tell you in darkness, that speak in light, and what ye hear in the ear, that preach upon the house tops." (v.27)

Then he teaches them more about how to evangelize. In Matt. 13:10-23, his disciples came to him privately and asked the meaning of a parable. In verse 36-52, he explains more about parables to the twelve privately. In 16:13-20, he taught the twelve about who he was and told them, "... that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ."(v.20)

In verse 24-28, he taught only his disciples about discipleship. In 18:1-35, he taught them privately about childlike faith, another parable and offences, and about forgiveness. In 19:10-12, about eunuchs. In 19:23-20:19, he taught doctrine privately to the twelve concerning the rich, another parable, and then verse 17 says;

And Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside along the way, and said unto them." (v.17)

Matt. 24,25, and up to 26:2, is more private or secret teaching to the twelve. In 26:20-46, is more teaching in private to the twelve at the last supper. John goes into lengthy detail as to just what he taught them in secret. These verses are only from Matthew's gospel. And for him to say, "and in secret have I said nothing.", is simply a lie, or to put it more tactfully, its not a truthful statement. There is a classic example but it is in John's gospel.

"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him,..." (John 3:1,2)

The words, "by night", makes it in secret, because Nicodemus was ashamed to be seen with Jesus. Jesus then proceeds to teach several things, secretly, one on one, to one man. First, about being born again, then about Nicodemus being a teacher of Israel and not understanding, but Jesus spoke of what he knew. Then he spoke of his coming down from heaven and his being in heaven. Then of Moses' serpent, of how to obtain eternal life, and finally of light and darkness and truth. The twelve disciples apparently were absent on this occasion, or else Peter would have said something. So, in light of only this one incident, how could Jesus later say; "..., and in secret have I said nothing." --?

Chapter 18 Two or Three Witnesses

In the law it is written: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." (Deut. 19"15)

In the gospel of John, Jesus supposedly said concerning this law;
"It is written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true." (John 8:17)

Notice the words underlined, "your law", and "two men". Jesus here is defending himself before the Pharisees. He says the law is their law, implying he is not bound by it. He also says the witness of two men are required to verify truth in a matter. Then he continues on to name the two men that verify him as truth.

"I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." (v. 18)

Jesus here is saying that he is one that bears witness of himself, and God is the other one. But God is not a man as the law said was necessary. And, the one in question could not be considered one of those who bear witness either. It must be two other people. The Pharisees understood this about this law, that is why they asked him, in the next verse, where his father was.

"Then said they unto him, where is thy father?..." (v.19a)

Then Jesus proceeds to tell them why they did not know his father whom they naturally assumed was his natural father. Was Jesus above the law, and didn't have to abide by it? Did he make his own rules?

Chapter 19 "Then My Servants Would Fight to Defend Me."

When Jesus was before Pilate in judgment, he made an untruthful statement.

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from here." (John 18:36)

Here he said that, since his kingdom was not of this world, his servants would not fight to defend him, but if his kingdom was of this world, then his servants would fight to defend him. If his kingdom was not of this world, why did he command his disciples to sell their garments and buy swords?

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I come not to send peace, but a sword." (Matt. 10:34)

"..., and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." (Luke 22:36)

"And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords, and he said unto them, it is enough." (v.38)

Then just a few hours before Jesus made this untruthful statement, Peter had used his sword defending Jesus when he was arrested.

"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear." (John 18:10)

So, since Jesus said he had come to send a sword, and sell your garments and buy one, and he had just seen Peter try to defend him; why did he then say, "my kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from here."? If his kingdom was of this world, and his servants would fight, then he lied when he said, "but now is my kingdom not from here". If his kingdom was not of this world, why did he say he was come to send a sword, and commanded his disciples to buy one? If he knew in advance, that Peter would fight, why did he say they would not? If he did not know what he would do, did he have all knowledge? And if he was not of this world, why did he resort to physical violence when he overturned the money changer's tables and drove them out of the temple with a scourge? (John 2:14,15)

Modern day example is: a religious/political leader tells the judge before whom he has been brought on charges of dissension, that if his kingdom was of this world, his servants would fight to defend him, but his kingdom is not of this world. He makes this statement shortly after he told his followers to sell their clothes, if necessary, and buy AK-47's. When a couple of them were shown, along with many rounds of ammo, he said that was enough. Earlier that day, one of his followers shot and wounded one of the cops that had come to arrest him. In light of what he told his followers, and the shooting, did he lie to the judge?

Chapter 20 Destroyed Private Property

In the law it was forbidden to destroy fruit trees.

"Only the trees which thou knowest that they are not trees for food, thou shalt destroy...?(Deut. 20:20)

Now Jesus surely knew this law, however, he disregarded it.

"And when he saw a fig tree along the way, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever. And presently the fig tree withered away." (Matt. 21:19)

"...; for the time of figs was not yet." (Mark 11:13)

The law said that if anyone killed a beast that belonged to someone else, he must make it good or restore it to the owner.

"And he who killeth a beast shall make it good, beast for beast." (Lev. 24:18)

"And he who killeth a beast, he shall restore it." (v.21)

"...; for I am the LORD thy God." (v.22)

Jesus, on the other hand, told demons to go into a herd of 2,000 pigs, which, if he had all knowledge, knew would run into the sea and drown. (see Mark 5:11-13)

Question. Did Jesus keep the law, as he said he did, and restored all those 2,000 pigs to their owners? Or, did he not? Was he above keeping the law? Why would he destroy the fig tree of someone else? Why would he expect figs on it when it was not the time for figs? Was he having a bad day? Did he restore all the value of the pigs to the owner, as the law commanded?

Chapter 21 Who Will Send the Comforter?

Either John or Jesus made a flat out contradictory statement, all in the same book, one chapter apart.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the father, even the spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the father, he shall testify of me." (John 15:26)

Notice the one who will send the Comforter is Jesus himself. Now drop back exactly one chapter and read who is the sender.

"But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you." (John 14:26)

Who then will send the Comforter? Can you believe what Jesus said? If you can, who will the sender be?

Chapter 22 Who Raised Jesus From the Dead?

I will give only two verses for each side of this controversy. The first one are the verses that are in the salvation formula.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. 10:9)

"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." (Acts 4:10)

There are other verses that say that it was God The Father who raised Jesus the Son from the dead, nevertheless, here are only two verses that tell us, it was not God the Father at all

but Jesus the Son, himself who raised himself from the dead.

"Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19)

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (John 10:16) (see verse 17 also)

So, who raised him up, God the father, or Jesus himself, the Son? Or both? If God did it, then Jesus lied when he said he would raise himself, if he raised himself, then Luke and Paul lied by saying God would do it. Either way you look at it, someone lied. Who deceived whom?

Chapter 23 Jesus Broke the Sabbath

The Pharisees really were right in accusing Jesus of breaking the law of the Sabbath. Let's lay a little groundwork first. First, God supposedly rested on the Sabbath day.

"And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." (Gen. 2:2)

In Exodus, God reinforced the law of rest in the fourth commandment.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." (Ex. 20:8,9)

Then he gives the reason for the Sabbath day.

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."(v.11)

Now, according to the law, no work at all was to be done on the Sabbath days, not even good works. This brings us to the N.T.

"And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath (namely healed a man and told him to carry his bed). But Jesus answered them, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:16,17) The word "hitherto", is # 2193 & 737; when together they are, "until now".

Here Jesus admits that God has worked on the Sabbath day, for he explains what he did by saying:

"Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the father do; for whatever things he doeth, these also doeth the son in the same manner." (v.19)

So, Jesus is saying, what God does in the form of works, so he does the same also. He is saying, since God is healing on the Sabbath, he will also heal on the Sabbath, and whatever other works God does on the Sabbath, he also will do the same. (read v.v.20,21)

In conclusion, Jesus admitted to working and breaking the Sabbath, but he does it because God is doing the same. It looks like God didn't stop working on the Sabbath, if the way Jesus understands it is correct.

Chapter 24 Jesus Unclean !

The Bible repeatedly says that nothing pure can come from a woman.

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." (Job 14:4)

"How then can man be justified with God? Or, how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" (Job 25:4)

Anyone touching a woman within seven days after she has menstruated (bled) is impure, according Lev. 15:19, which says:

"And if a woman have an issue, and her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days; and whosoever toucheth her shall be unclean until the evening." (Lev. 15:19)

Baby Jesus must have touched his mother every day during those seven days, which made him unclean until the evening each day for seven days. Mary was also unclean another 33 more days.

"And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing (not even baby Jesus?), nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled." (Lev. 12:4)

Mary was unclean all this time, from Jesus' birth for the next forty days. Notice:

"... then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." (Lev. 12:8)

Mary must have been impure or unclean when she resumed menstruation, and since it is difficult to see how she could have avoided touching Jesus, such as changing his diapers, nursing him, etc., Jesus must have been unclean at the same time also. Even after the 40 days, at each of Mary's periods and for seven days after, Jesus was also unclean. I realize it wasn't the baby's fault, but he wasn't as pure as people like to think he was. Remember Job? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." and "Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?" We're told by those who know, that Jesus was, "untouched by sin or impurity, the pure son of God", however, this just could not have been the case.

Maybe Mary contaminated Jesus so much that is why he spoke almost disrespectful of her, saying, "Woman, what have I to do with you?". (John 2:4), calling her woman several times. Once his mother wanted to speak with him and he said, "Who is my mother?" (Matt. 12:46-50). He said to be his disciples you must hate your mother. (Luke 14:26) He cared so little for his mother that when he was twelve years old and in Jerusalem, he stayed back there for two days without asking, however, after that incident he subjected himself to her authority. (see Luke 2:41,51) Perhaps he got a good thrashing?

Chapter 25 Follow Another God

"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them, thou shalt not harken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God testeth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall ye put to death, because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee." (Deut. 13:1-5)

Did Jesus of Nazareth try to draw people to someone else other than Jehovah, with signs and wonders?

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37,38)

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28)

Even though Jehovah said he would give rest. (Ex. 33:14)

So, if a prophet, who can do signs and wonders, and if he seeks to turn people from Jehovah, the LORD, Israel's God, and to someone else, or another god, then, that prophet should die according to Jehovah's law. (Donated by Bill Henness)

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A Life without Christ

<http://exchristian.net/exchristian/2003/05/life-without-christ.php>

"What happens after nature, reason and science have all been exhausted? It is a pretty dismal life that a non-Christian must live! You put faith in the things of this world which are passing away. I am laying up my treasures in heaven."

This statement, or something like it is a common apologetic thrown out at the non-Christian. Throughout the New Testament the idea is promoted that those who enjoy this present world are wasting their lives and will ultimately regret it in the world to come. Having a good time here and now comes at an extremely high price, namely what is termed in Xtianity as the "second death." While there are differing view points on exactly what "hell" is exactly, it is generally agreed that "hell" is separation from God in some way. Although God is supposedly omnipresent and there is nothing in existence which HE did not create or at least mandate and approve, yet somehow, where ever or what ever hell is, HE is not in it. Therefore HE is both omnipresent and not-omnipresent simultaneously. While this may be a contradiction to our puny human minds, it all makes sense to HIM and it will to us too, once we reach HEAVEN.

Um, yeah, right!

Anyway, although this would make an excellent rant in itself, this is not the direction I want to go. I want to talk about the idea that my life is of no comparative value next the faithful Christian life. Of course having been an Xtian for many years, I understand the thinking. It goes something like this: "I am going to live forever in Heaven with GOD. All unbelievers are going to be relegated to HELL where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth - called the second death. While those unbelievers may have enjoyed the heck out of their lives it will end, and even if I suffer the most hideous privations as a Christian, my reward will go on for eternity, while their reward is only for the here and now. Therefore, I must conclude that my life as a Christian is of infinitely more value than those of the pitiful unbelievers. I am the vessel made for honor in the Potter's house, while they are the vessels unto dishonor.

Now as an unbeliever I know that my life only finds true meaning in the real and material world I live in. The believer believes that true meaning is found for his or her life in the spiritual realm. The spiritual realm is touted as being better than the material realm, so ultimately a spiritual person is better than a material person and a spiritual life of much more value than a material life. My life will probably not last much beyond 70 or 80 years if I am lucky. However, a Christian believes that their existence will continue forever and ever.

It appears to me that in the final analysis, it is not being happy or sad that defines the value or quality of life in Christianity as much as longevity. I may suffer terribly for being a Christian,

but that time in misery will be so short in comparison to how long I will live in heaven. Conversely, while my happiness on earth may be awesome, it is admittedly short lived. I can only conclude from this that a life that never ends is better than a life that ends.

In traditional Christianity the only earth creature that has the possibility of living for eternity is the human being. No other form of life on the planet is even offered the opportunity to live forever. Since all animals are only destined for the grave, does that mean that the lives of all animals are valueless? I had a dog that lived 10 years and died. I also had a dog that lived 2 years and died. Was the one who lived the longest more valuable, or did they both live worthless lives because they died anyway. The companionship they provided, the protection of the property, the affection they showed was just a big waste of time because they did not live forever. Is that right? Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Mark Twain and Thomas Jefferson were not Christians. Were their lives pointless and meaningless because of their lack of religion? These three men changed the world, affecting the lives of millions without placing obligation on anyone for their contributions to history. Yet in the fundamentalist mind, these guys were a waste of human flesh, because they didn't ask Jesus into their hearts.

All animals on earth die, and not one is accused of being valueless because of lacking an eternal destiny. Only the most inhumane think that animals lives are worthless. Only humans have the arrogance to think they somehow deserve to live forever while all other life perishes, making room for the future. Even if we believe this way, we do not look down on our four footed pets and friends simply because they are without a soul. We still invite them to live in our homes and love their affectionate responses to our attentions. Sometimes we love our pets better than people.

Apparently even their very short lives have meaning.

It is not the length of a life that gives it value, it is what that individual does with the life that gives it value. The person who is loved has extraordinary value in the eyes of the lover. The person who is hated has very little value in the eyes of the hater. Life finds meaning and value in a number of ways, but most would agree that love is the defining quality that makes it all worth while. Even the Christian speaks of love as if they alone have the real corner market on the emotion.

So where am I going with this?

Jesus hates most of the world. While claiming to having infinite love for all, the Bible is emphatic on explaining that those who grow up and live in non-Christian cultures, or in areas where the gospel has not penetrated, or lived in history before Christianity either existed or had been brought to them, or have been converted to a heretical version of Christianity, or just don't have the capacity to believe in it, and so on and so on and so on, are going to be tortured for all eternity while God and the angels look on smiling. God, the angels and even the human inhabitants of heaven would have to be happy about all those billions in hell, because there is no sadness in heaven, it is not allowed. Picture this: Here I am in heaven while my wife whom I loved as much as my own life and my only son are burning in agony forever in hell. Somehow this makes me really happy, because it is God's will for me to be happy. After all, I asked Jesus in my heart in life and though I prayed daily for my family, they did not believe, so.....

While I may live forever in heaven, my life there is valueless. I am there because I made a pact with a monster. I may go on forever, but I am happy and joyful in the presence of the same one who is torturing those I love. Forget all the bologna about my family choosing their fate by not believing. God says he loves us unconditionally. Unconditionally means unconditionally. Apparently there are conditions on His love and that condition is for you to obey His instructions or be tortured. And why is he torturing them? Just because they couldn't or didn't believe a bunch of stupid religious rhetoric and say the magic formula of (A): admit you are a sinner, (B): believe that Christ rose from the dead, and (C): confess with your mouth that Jesus is LORD, or some other silly formulated bullshit.

We humans are uncomfortable with our mortality and try to find somehow, any way, to deny the reality that we will someday die and disappear. We are dust in the wind, tis true, but just going on and on forever does not make our lives any more worthwhile. In fact, really accepting that we only have a short time to live might actually encourage some of us to get off our butts and make the most of the lives we have.

Death is a part of life. None of us want to go there, but we will. Before I was born, I did not exist. I suppose one could say that I was not alive before I was born. When I die, I will return to the same status I had previous to my life - I will not be alive. From what I remember of being "not alive," it was not unpleasant or the slightest bit inconvenient. From a non-religious perspective, death is not something to be overly afraid of. Death is simply the way of nature. It is a part of evolution and change.

In the Christian view, death is something to fear greatly. If you don't get the right religion, and even the right version of the right religion, you have the very real threat of eternal damnation.

In so many ways, losing Christ has been the most freeing and encouraging thing that ever happened to me.

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